

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 MMO-04 SS-15 SP-02 PER-03 ABF-01 EB-07

NSC-05 OMB-01 /049 W

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P R 011431Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5462

USDOC WASHDC

UNCLAS JIDDA 5298

FROM AMBASSADOR PORTER TO DEPUTY ASST SECRETARY SOBER

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: AFSP, APER, ABLD, BEXP, SA, US

SUBJECT: RIYADH-JIDDA STAFFING REQUIREMENTS--SECOND E/C
OFFICER FY 1977

REF (A) STATE 159094, (B) JIDDA 3626, (C) STATE 113667,
(D) JIDDA 2841

1. EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED NO INDICATION THAT SAG IS DISPOSED TO LET US INCREASE RIYADH STAFF ON "RESIDENT" BASIS. ON CONTRARY, IN DISCUSSIONS WITH FONMINISTRY, SAG HAS SINGLED OUT EMBASSY/RIYADH LIAISON OFFICER AS UNIQUE, POSING PROBLEMS FOR THEM IN HOLDING OFF OTHER COUNTRIES ANXIOUS TO OBTAIN EQUAL FOOTING.

2. AS RESULT SAG ATTITUDE, WE SHALL HAVE TO CONTINUE TO COVER RIYADH ON "ROTAIONAL" BASIS FROM JIDDA, EXPENSIVE, TIME-CONSUMING AND NOT AT ALL EFFICIENT. LIAISON OFFICER'S DUTIES INCLUDE FUNCTIONS ACROSS THE BOARD IN SUPPORT OF EMBASSY AND ARE NOT EXCLUSIVELY ECON/COMMERCIAL. I RECOMMEND THAT EMBASSY'S REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF A "SECOND" ECON/COMM OFFICER FOR FY 1977 BE APPROVED IN ORDER TO HELP SPREAD THE BURDEN OF THIS CUBMERSOME ARRANGEMENT AND NOT LEAVE JIDDA SHORT-HANDED WHEN AN OFFICER COMMUTES TO RIYADH.

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3. EMBASSY WOULD EXPECT WITH ARRIVAL OF COMMERCIAL OFFICER TO FILL POSITION 20-5410-113 (STATE 056246) AND THE DEPARTMENT'S APPROVAL OF THE "SECOND" ECON/COMM OFFICER POSITION BEING REQUESTED HERE TO KEEP BOTH JIDDA AND RIYADH COVERED BY NOT LESS THAN TWO COMMERCIAL OFFICERS EACH AT ANY TIME. THIS WILL STILL BE FAR LESS THAN THE PERSONNEL AND FACILITIES OFFERED BY THE COMPETITION (FOUR SWEDISH TRADE OFFICERS, FIVE FOR CANADA, GUEST VILLAS FOR VISITING JAPANESE BUSINESSMEN, AN IMPRESSIVE NEW SOUTH KOREAN TRADE CENTER).

4. EMBASSY MUST HAVE SUFFICIENT ECON/COMM PERSONNEL TO MEET THE CHALLENGE (AND THE OPPORTUNITIES) OF THE EXPANDING SAUDI MARKET WHICH WE HAVE ADDRESSED IN THE COUNTRY COMMERCIAL PROGRAM. UNITED STATES FIRMS BASED IN KINGDOM HAVE GROWN TO 236 FROM 97 IN ONLY FOURTEEN MONTHS. WHETHER BASED PERMANENTLY AT RIYADH OR ON ROTATIONAL BASIS, THE APPROVAL OF THE "SECOND" ECON/COMM OFFICER WOULD ASSIST US GREATLY IN OUR TASK OF SERVING ADEQUATELY THE U.S. BUSINESS COMMUNITY AND MEETING OUR REPORTING RESPONSIBILITIES ON A MORE TIMELY AND COMPREHENSIVE BASIS.
PORTER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 01 AUG 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976JIDDA05298
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760296-1074
From: JIDDA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760898/aaaadidr.tel
Line Count: 83
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 STATE 159094, 76 JIDDA 3626, 76 STATE 113667, 76 JIDDA 2841
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: SmithRJ
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14 MAR 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <14-Mar-2001 by hughesjp>; APPROVED <31 JAN 2005 by SmithRJ>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: RIYADH-JIDDA STAFFING REQUIREMENTS--SECOND E/C OFFICER FY 1977
TAGS: AFSP, APER, ABLD, BEXP, SA, US
To: STATE
COM
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006